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SUBJECT: IRAQ PRTs WEEKLY ROUNDUP FOR 17-23 FEBRUARY
2006

¶1. SUMMARY: The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) report weekly their activities and progress towards helping the provincial governments achieve self-governance capability. The following paragraphs summarize their activities in several areas for the period 17-23 February 2006. The Ninawa Governor worked with the PRT and media to improve communications to the citizens and his staff. Kirkuk Provincial Council Chairman said Kirkuk is neglected by the central government. A recent invitation for the Kirkuk Provincial Council to visit Erbil prompted rumors that a deal is being made to form a Shia-Kurd Government in Baghdad which includes the return of Kirkuk to Kurdistan. Babil Province is gearing up to manage anticipated receipt from Baghdad of development and reconstruction funds. The Ninawa Chief Justice agreed to support attempts to hold insurgent trials in the province versus transferring them to Baghdad. Activity of Anti-Iraq Forces was down in Ninawa but continued in north Babil. END SUMMARY.

NINAWA PROVINCE

¶2. GOVERNANCE. The Ninawa PRT worked with the Governor to improve his communication among his Iraqi staff. On several occasions, the Governor was informed about Iraqi meetings through Coalition channels rather than Iraqi channels. The PRT offered to assist in establishing weekly senior provincial cabinet staff meetings. The Governor has also been reaching out more to the citizens of Ninawa via the media. During this report period, he used television and radio appearances to address fuel shortage issues and denounce insurgent activity.

¶3. ECONOMIC. A cost estimate was submitted to the U.S. Army Rapid Fielding Initiative Office to develop the job program described in reporting for 10-16 February. The planned jobs will be for trash collection from main city streets that have high incidents of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). PRT engineers worked with the Mosul Director General of Municipality to prepare the technical requirements for the program.

¶4. RULE OF LAW. The Ninawa Chief Justice promised his assistance in increasing public access to the Tal Afar courthouse and examining recent appellate decisions that dramatically reduced lengthy prison terms for convicted insurgents. In addition, he stated his support for the PRT efforts to facilitate the trials of insurgent suspects in Ninawa rather than the current practice of transferring such trials to

Baghdad.

¶5. SECURITY. Activities of Anti-Iraqi Forces were low during this report period. Poor weather conditions were believed to be the primary reason in the drop in activity.

¶6. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RECONSTRUCTION. The Mosul Sewage Operation Manager identified key management issues facing his department: a lack of detailed job descriptions; recovery of operation and maintenance costs; a shortage of skilled technicians; and lack of transparency. Construction on several projects were halted, one for payment issues between the contractor and subcontractor and others due to funding issues and proposed re-scoping of projects.

TAMIM PROVINCE

¶7. POLITICAL. Provincial Council Chairman Rizgar Ali told the PRT Team Leader that he feels Kirkuk is neglected by Baghdad and that national officials continue to interfere and attempt to fill local positions. Also, the KDP chief for Tamim Province, Najaf Hasan, complained that some ministers in Baghdad are favoring projects in certain neighborhoods of Kirkuk at the expense of other areas, due to ethnic/sectarian reasons. Other significant issues that arose during the week include:

--The Kurdistan Islamic Group leader issued a fatwa to kill Mariwan Halabjayee for writing the recently published book Sex, Islamic Law, and Women.

--A newly established Provincial Council Committee to deal with Article 58 issues will start its work by concentrating on three suburbs of Kirkuk where there are significant property claims from returning displaced persons. (NOTE: Lack of clarity on valuation and payment procedures has hampered the payment of compensation on a significant number of cases already adjudicated by the Iraqi Property Claims Commission (IPCC). END NOTE.)

--The Kirkuk Provincial Council received an invitation from the Kurdistan Regional Parliament to visit Erbil. No details as to the purpose of the visit were given, but it is suspected to be in regards to unsubstantiated rumors of a political deal being made to form a Shia-Kurd Government in Baghdad which would include Kirkuk being returned to Kurdistan.

¶8. SECURITY. The bombing of the al-Askariyah Mosque in Samarra limited movement and restricted normal PRT activities. There were two peaceful demonstrations and the Kirkuk Government Center was closed one day to observe a day of mourning.

¶9. RECONSTRUCTION. The Project Coordination Center (PCC) reviewed 23 new projects nominations submitted during the past two weeks. Fifteen of the nominations will go forward to the Provincial Reconstruction Development Committee (PRDC). Kirkuk provincial leaders approved an alternate site for the GST-5 Water Storage Tank Project. It will require the removal of 20 homes and the provincial council leaders committed to have the families relocated by 26 March.

BABIL PROVINCE

¶10. ECONOMIC. Babil Province is slated to receive \$55 million in Regional Development Funds and \$60 million in Accelerated Governance Reconstruction Funds

from the Central Government. The Provincial Treasurer indicated the rules for management of these accounts are being formulated by the Minister of Finance (MoF) and should be available within the week. However, Babil can expect to receive 20 percent of these allocations by next week. The Provincial Council began discussions on how they will manage the 400 plus projects likely to be supported under the allocation. Decisions made thus far include: the establishment of a project management unit that will be directly involved in the identification of projects; management of the project contracting process (public announcements, opening of bids, review of bidders, selection of the winning contractor, and contract signing) and oversight of contract implementation; the contracting of engineering services vs. using internal engineers from the directorates; and consideration of using public opinion to identify needed projects. The Treasurer requested PRT assistance with these efforts and offered to provide a list of areas where the PRT could be helpful.

¶11. SECURITY. Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF) activity in the northern part of Babil Province continued over the past week with attacks on the local populace and Multi National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) convoys. The northern area of the province continues to have higher levels of violence against both civilians and Coalition forces than the rest of the province, including several recent murders, particularly near the city of Jabella. This escalation included crimes committed by persons dressed in Iraqi Security Forces uniforms, which has degraded the populace trust in the ability of the GoI to protect them from terrorists. In response to the bombing of the al-Askariyah Mosque in Samarra, both violent and peaceful demonstrations took place on 22-23 February.

¶12. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RECONSTRUCTION. PRT members visited the village of Seddah. The mayor told the team that seven of their electric line transformers were damaged and only one had been repaired. The Babil Director of Electricity told PRT engineers that 41 transformers had been purchased with Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) funding and they were released for installation on 22 February.

¶13. A contract discrepancy was noted during a pre-construction meeting for the #80 Street Project, a \$3 million project which includes construction of a four lane road on the west side of Hillah. If unresolved, the discrepancy could result in the termination of the contract.

¶14. TRAINING. On 20 February, the PRT held a workshop on "Strategic Planning and Proposed Planning System". Topics included: Modern Administration, The Role of Managers, and The Importance of Information in short, medium, and long term plans. The workshop resulted in the development of an action plan to initiate directorate assessments with clear responsibilities and organizational structure for each directorate.

SATTERFIELD